

Statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Jan. 22, 2009

By Jeanette Zentgraf, CWA Communications Coordinator

CWA opposes SB 223, because the purpose of the Bill is not to grant protections for the homosexuals, but to outlaw the expressions of God fearing people, who oppose homosexuality, based on their faiths in God.

Just this past spring the Missoulian printed an article about a professional photographer working in Arizona, who was asked by a homosexual couple to photograph their wedding reception. He refused saying that he would feel uncomfortable, because of his faith in the Bible, but that there were other photographers, who would do it. The couple sued him and in a court of law was awarded \$4,000. He is appealing the verdict, but because Arizona incorporated sexual orientation into their Hate Crimes Law, I doubt if there will be a reversal. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution grants the free expression of faith, but the Hate Crimes Law usurps that freedom.

I've attended every Hate Crimes Legislative Hearing since we moved to MT 14 years ago. I never heard evidence of a homosexual who was unable to buy or rent a house; or get a job and hold it. There are known homosexual teachers in the Missoula County School District, and we don't, nor do others try to remove them. Why would we, unless they were flirting and carrying-on with their students. That would be deemed inappropriate behavior for homosexual or heterosexual teachers.

Yes, there have been physical abuses against homosexuals by evil and violent people and our laws against such violence are clear and have been enforced. The criminals have been brought to justice and rightly so. We in MT don't need SB 223 to make justice more just.

As the claims of a desperate need for this Bill are non-existent, we urge this committee to oppose it on the grounds that it literally establishes a prejudice against Christians and other believers in God. Remember that the courts in California believe that they have grounds based on their Hate Crimes Law to usurp the will of the citizens concerning gay marriage. SB 223 is not a just Bill.

Jeanette Zentgraf
P.O. Box 1116
Lolo MT 59847
Phone # 1-406-273-3685